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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an anthropological description of "compadrazgo" (cogodparenthood) as a sociocultural institution in a state owned sugar cane plantation in the southeastern part of the Dominican Republic. The enthnohistory of the compadrazgo cultural complex is outlined and the institution's roots in ancient Europe before its establishment in contemporary Latin America are described. In addition, relevant theoretical and ethnographic literature on compadrazgo is reviewed. It is concluded that: (1) compadrazgo in the community studied does not completely correspond with the model reported for the Dominican society at large, due to the distinctive subculture of rural cane workers; (2) intra class horizontal compadres' choice making in a single social class enclave need not imply a coincidence with reciprocal symmetry in the social exchange of the ensuing interpersonal relationships, since there are differences in expectations among the actors involved; (3) compadrazgo provides functional devices for social control, though its function in integrating ethnically dissimilar groups (Haitians and Dominicans, for example) is limited; (4) the maximization of compadres' selection is relative; and (5) compadrazgo operates in a systematic and normative fashion and deviations may be predicted and explained in terms of socioeconomic and cultural factors. (Author/GC)

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RITUAL KINSHIP IN A DOMINICAN REPUBLIC PLANTATION*

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RITUAL KINSHIP IN A DOMINICAN REPUBLIC PLANTATION

ROLANDO A. ALUM, II

ABSTRACT AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF CO-GODPARENTHOOD (COMPADRAZGO) IN A DOMINICAN PLANTATION COMMUNITY IS PRESENTED AND COMPARED WITH OTHER REPORTS OF RITUAL KINSHIP. SIMULTANEOUSLY, SEVERAL RELEVANT HYPOTHESES ARE TESTED, FOLLOWED BY THE FORMULATION OF NEW CONSEQUENTIAL ETHNOLOGICAL INTERROGATIVES.

SUMMARY*

THIS PAPER PRESENTS (A) AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF COMPADRAZGO (COGODPARENTHOOD) AS A SOCIO-CULTURAL INSTITUTION IN A TYPICAL STATE-OWNED SUGAR-CANE PLANTATION IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. (B) IT ALSO OUTLINES THE ETHNO-HISTORY OF THE COMPADRAZGO CULTURAL COMPLEX FROM ANCIENT EUROPE TO CONTEMPORARY LATIN-AMERICA; (C) SURVEYS THE THEORETICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC RELEVANT LITERATURE; AND (D) FORMULATES NEW QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, POINTING OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF RITUAL KINSHIP AND THE NECESSITY OF FURTHER STUDIES. (E) IN ADDITION, THE STUDY PRESENTS SOME INTRA AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISONS, AND TESTS A SERIES OF HYPOTHESES CONCERNING COMPADRAZGO SPIRITUAL AFFINITY. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT IS CONCLUDED:

(A) THAT COMPADRAZGO IN THE COMMUNITY STUDIED DOES NOT COMPLETELY CORRESPOND WITH THE MODEL REPORTED TO THE DOMINICAN SOCIETY AT LARGE, DUE TO INTRINSIC PECULIARITIES OF THE SUB-CULTURE OF RURAL CANE WORKERS.

(B) THAT INTRA-CLASS HORIZONTAL CO-GODPARENTS' CHOICE-MAKING IN A SINGLE SOCIAL CLASS ENCLAVE NEEDS NOT IMPLY A COINCIDENCE WITH RECIPROCAL SYMMETRY IN THE SOCIAL EXCHANGE OF THE ENSUING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS--SINCE THERE ARE ALWAYS DIFFERENCES IN THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE ACTORS INVOLVED.

(C) THAT COMPADRAZGO DOES PROVIDE OBVIOUS FUNCTIONAL DEVICES FOR SOCIAL CONTROL, THOUGH ITS FUNCTION IN INTEGRATING ETHNICALLY DISSIMILAR GROUPS IS ONLY LIMITED, DUE TO THE ISOMORPHIC NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP ESTABLISHED.

(D) THAT THE MAXIMIZATION OF COMPADRES' SELECTION IS A RELATIVE ONE.

(E) THAT COMPADRAZGO, NONETHELESS, OPERATES IN A SYSTEMATIC AND NORMATIVE FASHION, DEVIATIONS FROM WHICH STANDARDS MAY BE PREDICTED AND ULTIMATELY EXPLAINABLE IN TERMS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC-CULTURAL FACTORS.

IN VIEW OF THE SCARCITY OF COMPARABLE STUDIES, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THIS REPORT WILL CONSTITUTE AN ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CORPUS OF SOCIO-ANTHROPOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE, PARTICULARLY AS IT APPLIES TO THE STUDY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN SOCIETIES.

* Spanish Summary, p.35, below.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

SUMMARY ii

PREFACE iii

I. INTRODUCTION 1

1. Problem Statement, Research Purpose, and Methodology 2
2. On the Ethno-History of Compadrazgo 4
   A. The European Genesis of Compadrazgo 4
   B. Variations on a Theme: Compadrazgo in the New World 5

II. THE COMMUNITY OF BATEY: LOCATION, SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION 6

III. THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMPADRAZGO IN BATEY 8

1. Classifications of Compadrazgos in Batey 8

TABLE I: Classifications 11
CHART I: System of Relationships in Baptism Compadrazgo 12
TABLE II: Dimensions of Interrelationships 13

2. Baptism Compadrazgo: Importance and Personnel 14
3. Other Forms of Compadrazgo 17

IV. THE ELEMENTARY STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS OF CHOICE-MAKING: AN OFFER YOU 'CAN' REFUSE 18

1. The Differing Realms of Choice-Making 18
2. Asymmetry and Ethnic Differentiation 22
3. The Limits of Maximization 25

V. TOWARDS AN ETHNOLOGY OF COMPADRAZGO 30

1. The Systemic-Mechanical Aspects of Compadrazgo 30
2. Concluding Remarks 31

VI. APPENDIXES 34

I. The Literature on Compadrazgo 34
II. Resumen en Español/Spanish Summary 35

NOTES 36

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 36
FOOTNOTES 36

BIBLIOGRAPHY 42

Synopsis of Vitae 50

"The system of relationships called the compadrazgo or padrinazgo...is...the most foreign to North American customs and way of thinking...It is strange that this type of linkage between persons and families has not received more extensive treatment in the sociological and ethnological literature. Its presence constitutes one of the outstanding differences between the basic social organization of /the/ 'Anglo'...and /the/ 'Latin' America/n societies/. JOHN GILLIN (1945) MOCHE, p.104.

I. INTRODUCTION

COMPADRAZGO[1] in its most limited sense, refers to the social institution of ritual or spiritual kinship that is established between the parents and the godparents of an individuel. There are, however, a myriad of variations throughout the Mediterranean-oriented, predominantly Catholic cultures, as reported in the literature (Pitt-Rivers 1958, 1968).

Although among Anglo-Catholics the actors involved hardly form a discrete group once the ceremony is consummated, in the Latin world people are drawn into an enduring and regularly exercized kin-like relationship (Gillin 1945:104). It has been said that the compadrazgo complex[2] was the first genuine distinctive feature of the social organization of Latin American cultures (Foster 1953).[3] Yet, contrary to Pitt-Rivers' (1958) opinion, it is still far from having been studied extensively.[4] The compadrazgo literature on the Caribbean in particular is still meager, limited to a few often rather superficial references scattered throughout the not too sizable corpus of social scientific Caribbean literature.[5] On the other hand, this is apparently the first study that focuses on compadrazgo in a traditional plantation sub-culture.[6,7] Let me add that Deshon's (1963) excellent study is the only one reporting compadrazgo in a hacienda, in this case, an

henequén estate in Yucatán (México). She considers both hacienda and plantation, however, as being tantamount conceptualizations, overlooking the initial differences previously suggested by Wolf and Mintz (1957) in a land-mark article for those two types of socio-economic organizations in Middle America and the Antilles.[8]

Let us now delineate the goals of this paper.

1. Problem Statement, Research Purpose and Methodology

The most critical research queries of this writing are:

TO what extent does compadrazgo in a Dominican plantation sub-culture:
(a) conform to the model ascribed to the Dominican society at large
(b) and differ from the models reported for the rest of the continent,
(c) and why ?

Consequently, the aim of this paper is multi-purpose:

First, to present a much needed ethnographic description of the compadrazgo phenomenon in a Dominican sugar-cane plantation community, therein modestly contributing to fill in the above mentioned gaps in the social-scientific literature.

Second, to contrast the ethnographic patterns discerned in this sub-culture of rural workers with the model constructed for the Dominican society at large by a French-trained Dominican ethnologist, Luciano Castillo (1971) in the only such study in existence.

Third, to further compare the plantation compadrazgo to the cases reported for other areas of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Fourth, related to the third purpose, is the attempt at testing a series of hypotheses proposed by anthropologists and sociologists concerning ritual kinship in general and compadrazgo in particular.[9] In brief, these hypotheses refer to:

(A) the horizontal and vertical dimensions of compadres' choice and their relation to class solidarity (Mintz & Wolf 1950).

(B) the symmetrical and asymmetrical characteristics that compadrazgo may assume (Ingham 1970).

(C) the systemic features of the institution (Nutini 1975).

(D) the relative (substantivist/formalist) meximization of choice behavior (Forbes 1972).

(E) the non-religious functions of the institution, specifically in its potential rôle in (a) the avoidance of inter-personal conflicts (Sayres 1956)--and its corollary--(b) in the integration of different ethnic groups in plural enclaves (VanDenBerghe & VanDenBerghe 1966).

Fifth, in the concluding section, some theoretical (ethnological) considerations of ritual kinship in general and of compadrazgo in particular will be proposed. In addition, new issues for further research will be raised. The appendix section will include a summary in Spanish as well as a final consideration of the existing bibliography on compadrazgo.

As to the methodology employed, the author has followed the traditional field investigations techniques of participant-observation, informants' interviews, case studies, the accumulation of life histories, etc., and further "library" research. Little substantial "archival"-type research, however, has been integrated into the results reported here.

The community studied will be refered throughout the extension of this report with the pseudo-name of Batey. Before going into the intended descriptions, hypotheses-testing, and theory-building, we should first look, albeit briefly, at the historical antecedents of compadrazgo.

2. On the Ethno-History of Compadrazgo

We cannot afford here to delve much into the ethno-history of compadrazgo. Suffice it to draw a synoptic sketch, based on other excellent reports, to serve as background information.

A. The European Genesis of Compadrazgo

The origins of compadrazgo has been traced to Greek and Roman times, to the Jewish custom of securing a witness or sponsor at the circumcision ceremony of a male child,[10] which was later adapted and incorporated as so many other Jewish and/or pagan traditions into the basic sacramental liturgy of the Catholic Church, namely: baptism, confirmation and marriage. Of the three, baptism has been the most important, for it marks the initiation of a child (regardless of sex) into the Christian community by receiving a Saint's name (Kearney 1925). At the ceremony, the spiritual affinity between the sponsors and the neophyte is created; both god-parents (a male and a female) accept a binding relationship toward the godchild "before God" and are nominally responsible for his/her religious education (Goblet 1881). These basically simple kinds of relationships grew in European Medieval times to extend the spiritual affinity to the set of parents vis-à-vis the set of godparents as an adaptive mechanism, specially in relationship to land tenure and inheritance, as society evolved from a kinship to a territorial and, finally, to a class base (Mints & Wolf 1950).

The compadrazgo system of post-Feudal less industrialized southern Europe is more of a padrinazgo type, that is, the emphasis of the interpersonal relationships formed is on the triad constituted by the godchild and both of his godparents (a godmother and a godfather)

/Pitt-Rivers 1958/. From post-Feudal Spain, the institution was brought to the Americas, where it went through new processes of adaptation (Foster 1953), as will be noted next.

B. Variations on a Theme: Compadrazgo in the New World

From the Spanish padrinazgo form, the institution grew in Latin America to a "com-padrinazgo" form--to use Ravicz's (1967) neologism, in spite of Nutini's (n.d.) protestations. Here, the institution has become more of a contractual kin-like association between two sets of individuals--parents (or owners of things) and godparents, usually same-generation non-kinsmen--the third party (neophyte or thing) being the pretext over whom (or which) the social contract is established. As the late John Gillin (1945; 1951) put it, compadrazgo has evolved to constitute the institutionalized form of the most intimate friendship, characterized by a reciprocal flow of social and even material exchange and the highest deference behavior.[11] In contrast to the European model, our compadrazgo has in general been extended beyond sacramental rites to secular occasions, involving not only individuals but also objects, such as at the blessing of a new house, etc. Their significance and duration, however, range from the most sacred established over baptism to the most mundane established over a drinking fiesta (Dávila 1971; Martínez 1963; Stavenghagen 1959).

Previous studies attest not only to the ubiquitiousness of compadrazgo, but also to its irregularity throughout our continent. The number of occasions by which an individual may acquire new compadres has grown enormously. Nutini (1975) reports as many as 31 occasions in rural Tlaxcala, México. It could be said that the extension of the ensuing personal network is theoretically infinite, though the body of data is not conclusive as to where the kindred (and the extension of incest taboo) lines should be drawn.[12] Most authors do seem to concur, though, that the two most basic social functions

of compadrazgo are, as it may be gathered: (a) the extension of operational personal networks, and (b) the intensification of pre-existing ties, be it of natural kinship or friendship.

Having defined compadrazgo and surveyed its historical highlights, we may move on to outline the culture of the society in question, before looking at its own interpretation of compadrazgo.

II. THE COMMUNITY OF BATEY: LOCATION, SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION

BATEY (pseudoname)[13] is a typical community of cane-workers, belonging to one of the state-owned plantations,[14] located in the southeastern region of the Dominican Republic.[15] Most residents work in occupations related to the plantation, especially during the harvest or zafra, which usually lasts around 8 months--from about January to August each year. As is the case of all rural cane-workers' communities in the Dominican Republic, the ethnic composition of Batey is plural. The three main ethnic components are: (a) people generally considered Dominicans (Cf. González 1973-a)--some 50% of the community inhabitants; (b) migrant and long-established Haitians and their descendants; and (c) some Black West Indians (mostly English-speaking, from various of the Antillean islands) and their descendants--locally known as "cocolog".[16]

It is difficult to estimate the actual population of Batey with a certain accuracy, since there is a constant flow of people. Some come to the community only during the harvest season; this is especially true of yearly migrant Haitians.[17] Nonetheless, it is estimated that about 800 people live in some 160 households in Batey. There are more men than women, especially among the

non-Dominican componenets, due to the peculiar conditions in which male laborers are brought to work in the adjoining cane fields. Children number some 300 here. The migrant Haitians are mostly young males, housed in separate collapsing estate owned barracks. For the 1976 season, over 150 of them lived in Batey.

In general, the nuclear family plus the addition of some other single consanguine relatives (to any of the conjugal pair), is the pattern of household composition, as far as the Dominican and the long established non-Dominican components are concerened. Most conjugal couples, it should be added, are of a mutual concensus type, since the cost of a formal marriage is generally prohibitive to these poverty-stricken people.[18] Although the plantation owns all lands and most of the constructions, many of the families own their house, modestly built with wood and zinc. Some families, however, live in relatively new single-room row houses provided by the plantation.

There is no Catholic Church in the hamlet, though some nuns visit "from time to time" to cathechize. No priest has been seen in a long time, and the closest Catholic Church is by the sugar factory or central (in Spanish), some 10 Kilometers away. In contrast, there is an active group of protestants, known as convertidos (converts) or evangélicos (evangelicals).[19]

Authority is diversified upon various individuals, some responding to the municipal, provincial, or national governments, and some to the internal plantation structure. There is neither electricity, nor telephone, and water is drawn from a single wind-well.

From the social point of view, Batey may be considered an egalitarian, single classed village. As Mintz (various) has noted, plantation workers are class-isolates, since economic alternatives are extremely limited to them.[20] Class identity, a common knowledge of socio-economic rôles, in brief, provides stability and homogeneity to the plantation society.[21] There are internal differences of status, nonetheless, the most conspicuous of which follow ethnic lines: (a) at the bottom of the ladder is the seasonal migrant Haitian component, (b) followed up by the established Haitians, and (c) a bit higher, the West Indians. (d) At the top of the pyramid, we find the Dominican component. The cultural definition of race "Dominican style" is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that "white" characteristics are desirable; and locally defined non-White attributes are ideologically considered alien (Acosta 1976).[22] We shall see later how these and other individual differences play subtle rôles in the choice-making of spiritual-kinsmen.

With this culture outline of Batey in mind, we should now analyze the local version of compadrazgo relationship.

III. THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMPADRAZGO IN BATEY

This section - first presents the different ways in which compadrazgo may be heuristically classified in Batey, then analyzes baptism compadrazgo, and finally outlines other forms of the institution found in the community.

1. Classifications

Batey's version of compadrazgo bears much resemblance to those reported for the Dominican Republic at large and for Latin America in general. Nevertheless, there are several differences. As Table I

shows, there are some 5 basic identifiable occasions in the life, ceremonial, and socio-economic cycles upon which compadrazgo ties may be established in Batey. These are grouped into two somewhat unclearly differentiated types, religious and secular:

(A) In the religious type we find the compadrazgo formed over the rites de passage or sacraments of the Catholic Church, such as baptism, confirmation, and marriage. Bateyanos add a fourth religious type, the blessing of Catholic saints' images and of new things, such as a new house, etc.

(B) In the secular type we find the compadrazgo of friendship (amistad), which often confuses itself with the last religious type. Each occasion corresponds to a kind of compadrazgo, and each kind has obvious social, economic, and ceremonial-religious aspects. For example, each one of the 5 occasions serves either one of two ritual-symbolic objectives: (a) supernatural protection, or (b) intensification of previous religious commitments, as shown in Table I. These aspects and goals in turn vary in intensity, symbolic importance, and the degree of institutionalization of the events and activities that the type requires (Nutini 1975).

The 5 occasions may also be divided into two classes, namely prescriptive and optional. (i) Under prescriptive we may include those compadrazgo occasions that are characterized by the necessity to comply with them, and by the religious, social, and cultural sanctions which individuals would face if compliance were not to be followed. In Batey there is one sole occasion, baptism, that clearly falls within the class of prescriptive compadrazgo. (ii) Under optional we may include those types which as the name indicates are strictly voluntary in the sub-culture's ideology. In Batey these appear to

include all other occasions. So, as different to other Latin American sub-cultures, there is no direct correlation between religious types and precriptive class--on the one hand--and secular types and optional class--on the other hand (Cf. Nutini 1975:5ff.).

There are several variables which affect compadrazgo in Batey. For example, abject conditions of poverty limits the consumation of some of the sacramental rites, church marriage being a case in point; while migration affects the choice and the continuation of compadrazgo relationships. Another important factor is the enormous success of protestantism's incursion into the community (Cf. Lockward 1976). It is not rare, nonetheless, to find compadres--even over baptism--who have crossed religious lines.

The next section will specifically deal with baptism compadrazgo in the community studied.

TABLE I

CHART I

TABLE II

TABLE I

CLASSIFICATIONS OF COMPADRAZGOS IN BATEY

OCCASION	RELIGIOUS/ SECULAR	PRESCRIPTIVE/ OPTIONAL	RITUAL/SYMBOLIC OBJECTIVES
1)baptism:			
a) with priest	R	P	SUPERNATURAL PROTECTION
b) without priest	R		
2)confirmation	R	O	INTENSIFICATION
3)marriage	R	O	INTENSIFICATION
4)blessings:			
a)objects	R	O	PROTECTION
b)saints' images	R	O	PROTECTION
5)friendship	S	O	--
	TYPES		CLASSES

SYSTEM OF RELATIONSHIPS IN BAPTISM COMPADRAZGO

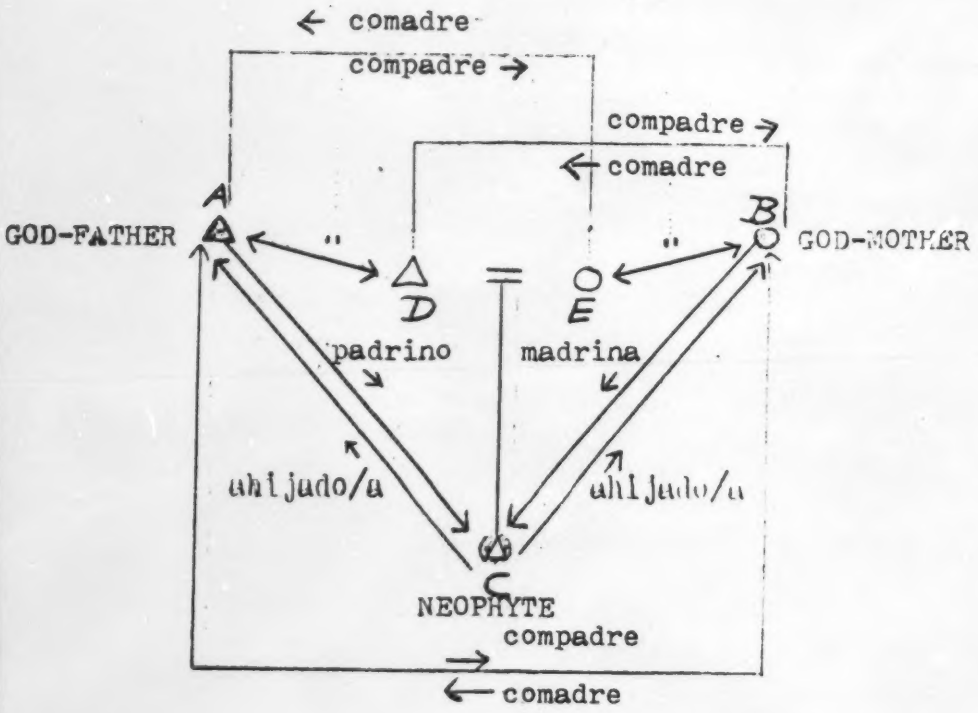

CHART I

TABLE II

DIMENSIONS OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS
IN COMPADRAZGO

	C neo-phyte	E mother	D father	B madrina	A padrino
C	neo-phyte	son/daughter	son/daughter	god-child	god-child
E	mother	mother	wife	co-god-mother	co-god-mother
D	father	father	husband	co-god-father	co-god-father
B	madrina	god-mother	co-god-mother	co-god-mother	co-god-mother
A	padrino	god-father	co-god-father	co-god-father	co-god-father

2. Baptism Compadrazgo: Importance and Personnel

As it may be deduced from the above discussion and the tables and charts inserted, the ties formed over the occasion of the baptism of an individual is the most important compadrazgo in Batey, similarly to many other Latin American cases (Foster 1953; Mintz & Wolf 1950; Paul 1942; Ravicz 1967; et al.).[23] Typically, the institution involves the following actors in Batey:

(A) one godfather (padrino)
(B) one godmother (madrina)
(C) (a minimum of) one godchild (ahijado/a)
(D) the father of the neophyte
(E) the mother of the neophyte

The interpersonal relationship of the spiritual affinity web operates in the following fashion (see Chart I and Table II):

(i) "A" is a compadre to "D" and "E", and padrino to "C"
(ii) "B" is a comadre to "D" and "E", and madrina to "C"
(iii) If "A" and "B" do not form a conjugal couple, then they are mutual compadres, i.e., "A" is compadre to "B", and reciprocally "B" is comadre to "A", though not much social exchange is expected between them
(iv) "C" is a godchild (ahijado/a) to "A" and "B"

There are two further sub-divisions of baptism in Batey--as well as in most rural areas--that is: "with a priest" and "without a priest". (a) Since no priest frequents Batey, actors must seek one outside the community, and very few Bateyanos can afford the travelling-plus-the-ceremony expenses. (b) A prevalent alternative to church baptism in Latin America in general is the baptism of "echarle el agua"--literally, pouring-the-water--whereas an individual serves as a proxy priest and performs the ceremony, usually for the fee of R.D.$1(=U.S.$1) in Batey. Presumably "holy water" (brought from the outside) is poured over the neophyte's head with the aid of some ritual herbs, while the "Creo"--i.e., Credo (Creed)--prayer is said ensemble.[24] This ceremony is mostly intended as a temporary measure,

in the hope of holding baptism with the assistance of a trained priest sometime in the future. In reality the second ceremony rarely takes place.

As in most other cases reported, the ceremony is ideally sanctioned with a fiesta which should be defrayed by the godparents. Rum and food is distributed among guests (practically anybody who happens to be nearby). The godmother is expected to defray the cost of the neophyte's outfit for the occasion. From then on, the relationship between all 5 spiritual affines is characterized by the highest deference, confianza (trust), and respeto (respect) behavior. Respect involves, among other things, the avoidance of any kind of interpersonal conflict, the suppression of curse-words (malas palabras), and the adoption of the formal usted (you) rather than the informal tú form (vous-tu in French) when conversing with each other. A godchild must respect his godparents as he/she would his/her own parents, and on every encounter must ask him/her for his/her blessing.[25] Compadres/comadres would use such gloss when addressing (or referring to) each other, overriding surnames or any other title terms. However, as different to other cases reported, this form of address does not override close consanguineal nor affinal terms.

The actors involved in the web consider themselves relatives, at least ideologically speaking, and behave towards each other as such. This behavior of trust and respect is extended to the conjugal partners of the actors--even if these partners are not themselves directly involved --as well as to the children of the actors, though there is no specific reference term for them. Interestingly enough, in the case of (informally) adopted children ("de crianza")--a pervassive phenomena in the D. R.--the child's godparents need not be accepted as

co-godparents by the set of foster parents. Incest-taboo does not apply to the relationship between the godchild and the children of his godparents. However, a strong incest-taboo applies to the 5 actors directly involved--save for the godmother vis-à-vis the godfather. According to local standards, godparents must love the godchild as if he/she were his/her own child. In case of the parents' absence, godparents are supposed to adopt the godchild. However, contrary to many writer's naïve assumption (e.g., Abrams 1976:192), natural relatives claim priority on the child's custody, at least in Batey, and I suspect this is largely true for the rest of Ibero-America.

Compadrazgo in Batey resembles the general Latin American pattern, nonetheless, in one more aspect, in the priority of the compadre-compadre relationship (compadrazgo or compadraje) over the godparent-ahijado/a dyadic relationship (padrinazgo). In spite of Nutini's (n.d.) opinion to the contrary, I believe there is a valid distinction between compadrazgo and padrinazgo (Ravicz 1967), though the term compadrazgo is more prevalent in the literature. It appears that in the grater Dominican society, both syndromes are operating concurrently (Castillo 1971), while among Cubans I found--in a previous still unpublished study--that the pattern is that of padrinazgo, a typical Spanish characteristic (Pitt-Rivers 1958). In the case of Bateyanos, many may not remember the names or nicknames, nor the number of their godchildren, but they surely remember whom their compadres are. This does not necessarily mean that the godparents-godchild triad is always necessarily unimportant, but that the subject-object (godparent-godchild) link is structurally passive and the subject-subject (father-godparent) link plays a more active rôle in Batey, especially among the male participants (i.e., father-godfather).

3. Other Forms of Compadrazgo

As to the other forms of compadrazgo occasions in Batey, the relationships established over some of them are not necessarily as binding, though in general they are modeled after the baptism compadrazgo. The occasions and intensity, however, are further limited, as said before, by circumstances exogeneous to the system itself. For example, in the larger Dominican society, students adopt a godparent of the opposite sex for graduation ceremonies. This would be impossible in Batey, for its single-room school only teaches up to third grade, and children can seldom afford to commute to other towns to attend higher grades (besides, children are important help in field and home chores). Confirmation, which requires one godparent of the same sex and a priest is seldom performed due, among other reasons, to the absence of formal religious services in the locality and the expenses involved in travelling. Church marriage, which would require one godparent of each sex is seldom practiced, as noted above. The compadres over the blessing of saints' images and things are in reality the same as compadres of friendship. As different to other Hispanic-American cases (e.g., Padilla 1956:294), Bateyanos always need someone or something to serve as the mediating entity or excuse over whom/which to establish what is considered a sacred relationship. As informants put it, even the baptism or blessing (apadrinamiento) of a cigarrette, for example, would suffice. The individuals involved in this case, who surely were close-friends and wanted to intensify their relationship, would behave towards each other as if the link were based on the most holy ritual, characterized by the expected trust and respect behavior, etc.

In concluding this section, let me add that I am aware that the rather synoptic ethnography of compadrazgo in Batey just presented is not exhaustive by any means.[26] Rather, I have selected the most salient operating principles that will be useful for intra and cross-cultural comparisons, and which will serve as support for the ethnological discussions that follow.

IV. THE ELEMENTARY STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS OF CHOICE-MAKING: AN OFFER YOU CAN REFUSE

Co-godparents' choice-making has received particular treatment in the literature, and rightly so since it is in that decision where we find the most intriguing aspects of the institution, as well as the most enlightening contributions to anthropological theory (Deshon 1963; Foster 1969; Ingham 1970; Thompson 1971; et al.). This section will discuss various functional implications of compadrazgo choice-making while making further selected cultural comparisons, and concurrently testing a series of propositions.

1. The Differing Realms of Choice-Making

It has been established above that although Batey is ethnically heterogenous, it is nonetheless socially homogenous. I insist on this since we will consider next the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of the process of choosing ritual kinsmen. If compadrazgo choice-making has received special attention it has been considering these two conceptualizations proposed by Mintz and Wolf (1950).

Compadrazgo is said to be (A) horizontal where the selection of co-godparents is intra-group, i.e., within the same social class; and (B) vertical where the selection is extra-group, i.e., outside of the class--where patron/client relationships are established (Foster 1961). To this effect, (a) Mintz and Wolf's (1950) hypothesis is that where the community is a self-contained, homogeneous society, i.e., where a single class exists--such as Barrio Poyal, a sugar

workers' community in Puerto Rico (Mintz 1951, 1956)--the choice of co-godparents tends to be horizontal.[27] (i) A corollary to this hypothesis is that horizontal compadrazgo serves to reinforce class solidarity, increasing in turn the gap with the extra-community dominant classes.

The investigation conducted in Batey so far confirms at least the first part of the hypothesis.[28] Co-godparenthood in Batey is typically horizontal: class equals are both ideologically and in reality preferred. Exogamy, that is, non-kinsmen, often co-workers or neighbors--of an approximate same age group--is the pattern in the selection of compadres. While the horizontal criteria differs to the model constructed for the larger Dominican society, exogamy is in accord with it. As to the (i) corollary on class solidarity, I shall postpone its discussion until later (in 3,C). Let us first look at Castillo's propositions on compadrazgo in a complex society.

According to Castillo (1971, 1973), Dominican compadrazgo (and/or padrinazgo)-- as Mintz and Wolf would predict for a stratified society--is predominatly vertical, which could be of two sub-types: ascending or descending. (a') Ascending is when the requestor seeks compadres among classes (or statuses) higher than his own. (b') Descending (verticality) is when people seek--or at least are open to--opportunities to become co-godparents to individuals in a relative lower class (or status). Notice though that the ones acting as godparents still come from a relatively upper class, and that the set of the neophyte- plus-the-parents come from a relatively lower class; whereas relatively upper class parents seek compadres ascending vertically--when possible--or at best horizontally, but never descending.

Press (1963) found a similar trend among Puerto Ricans in Chicago, where upper-class Boricuas (e.g., professionals) have become conscious of their social rôle, patronizing those less fortunate. Paternalism, the acquisition of the intangibles honor and prestige--bestowed by a large number of ritual kinsmen (see 2,B, below)--and the feeling of "noblesse oblige", however, are not the exclusive motivations surrounding these exceptional cases, for there are exploitative concomitants as well. Castillo (1971, 1973) has described several of the economic, political, and social functions of Dominican compadrazgo. He relates how landowners in rural areas may increase their personal network of ritual kinsmen descending-vertically in order to economically exploit co-godparents and/or godchildren, say by securing free or inexpensive labor from them. In the political order, the late dictator Trujillo became godfather to hundreds of children baptized en masse--in ceremonies where the neophyte, according to informants, would receive a $100/bill gift--securing thus loyalty from the co-godparents and consequently undermining the possibilities of rebellion. One should not forget that Dominicans, especially in the rural areas, take baptism-compadrazgo very seriously and would consider a sin, a sacrilege to even entertain "evil thoughts" about a compadre (Cf. Walker 1972:114-118). This practice of politicians is neither new, nor unique to the Dominican Republic.[29] Similar situations may be found in pre-revolutionary Cuba, as well as in other countries today (cf. Arizpe 1973; Osborn 1968).

On the other hand, Castillo (1973:86ff.) confirms that race--skin color/ethnic identity--is an important criterion for co-godparents' selection in the country, a criterion that permeates Batey's model as well (and which admittedly derives from historical-political-cultural

determinants. Ceteris paribus, lighter skin people of European-Dominican ancestry are preferred as affinal relatives, though there are a considerable number of inter-ethnic compadrazgos in Batey. Seasonal migrant Haitians are not invited by long-established Bateyanos. Rather than solely an ethnic differentiation reason, this might be due as well to the temporal character of the migrant Haitians' stay. (ii) Mintz (1956:390-391) has additionally proposed that compadrazgo may operate as a brake on the socio-economic mobility of participating individuals in a homogeneous society. (iii) Assuming that the only possible alternative is (out-)migration--as Mintz assumes--the implication is that the institution operates as a brake on migration as well. The information gathered in Batey leads me to believe that although some of the long-term residents would consider the benefits of an established network of compadres in the vicinity as a good reason for not leaving town--say for example to the cities in search of better economic opportunities (vid. note 20)--on the whole, compadrazgo's rôle to this effect is ineffective. When Bateyanos decide to migrate, the economic-poverty — imperative takes prededence as a rule. The reversed side of the (choice-) coin is that, as noted earlier, the residential instability characteristic of Dominican cane-workers' communities does affect the choice of spiritual affines and the subsequent interaction. To recapitulate, temporal residents, and individuals with a history of high geographical mobility are not generally sought, for seldom can contact be kept with anyone who does not remain in the environs.

Other aspects of Mintz's propositions will be dealt with below (in 3). Let us now return to the culturally defined racial/ethnic criterion for choosing compadres.

2. Asymmetry and Ethnic Differentiation

Foster (1953, 1961), Gillin (1951), Ravicz (1967), and others, have assumed that one of the crucial functions of compadrazgo in multi-ethnic communities is to bridge the gap between dissimilar groups. The VandenBerghe's (1966), however, suggest that compadrazgo across ethnic lines in Ladino-Mestizo San Cristóbal, México, actually increases the gap between the ethnic entities, since each group holds a different set of value expectations, which is accompanied by asymmetry in compadrazgo behavior. There are two interrelated issues at stake here: the asymmetrical nature, and the integrative implications of compadrazgo vis-à-vis dissimilar ethnics. I shall add a third closely related issue: the rôle of the institution in the avoidance of inter-personal conflicts (Middleton 1975; Sayres 1956). Let us start with the last one.

(A) Interpersonal disputes are as prevalent in Batey as in any other part of the world. There is a pronounced tendency among Bateyanos, however, to be involved in disputes across ethnic lines (i.e., Dominicans vs. Haitians, and so on), more so than within the same ethnic/nationality circle. Reference was made before to the number of inter-ethnic compadrazgo links in Batey. However, in the accumulated conflict cases analyzed so far, I have not become aware of any involving ritual kinsmen, regardless of ethnic provenience.[30] Thus, it appears that the institution's integrative function is locally effective to some extent as far as curbing inter-personal conflicts even across ethnic boundaries. Notwithstanding, I expect to encounter exceptional cases as further field research is conducted.[31]

(B) Based on field research in Tlayacapán, México, Ingham (1970) has proposed that all compadrazgo relationships, even when they are strictly horizontal, are nonetheless asymmetrical in nature. This brings us to a discussion of the differences between (a) "asking", and (b) "being asked" to participate in a compadrazgo tie. "Being asked" brings a lot more prestige than "asking" (Ingham 1970; Hammel 1968)- regardless of the cultual setting. Forbes (1971, 1972)--who has studied a town in Tlaxcala, México--proposes that the requestor or initiator--assuming it is, say the father of an unbaptized child,[32] as is the common rule in Batey--(i) remains in control of the relationship from its pristine stages, and (ii) that the one being requested consequently cannot be in control, (iii) nor can anyone control who will invite him/her to participate. The evidence from Batey is in agreement with the implied suggestion that each actor's rights, obligations, and expectations are distinct from the social, economic, and religious-ceremonial viewpoint. However, the requestor does not necessarily retain control of the relationship. I shall cite below (in C) some evidence in support of my position. Let us consider for the time being that, when in a case of baptism compadrazgo (see Chart I, supra): "D" (father) asks "A" and "B" to sponsor "C" (neophyte), "D" is implicitly asking "A" and "B", his potential godparents, a favor, since "A" and "C" will have to incur in certain religious, social, and economic obligations which --contrary to Nutini's (1975) suggestion--may never be reciprocated or balanced in other ways. Furthermore, it is precisely because "D" is the debtor that he may loose control of the relationship, even though "A" and "B" are supposed to always be obliging to "C" (since all godfather-godchildren interactions are inherently asymmetrical) and/or to "D" (the father). Thus, seen through this labyrinth, Ingham's hypothesis seems to be confirmed in Batey.

Notwithstanding, the crux of Forbes' (1971) previous propositions (i-iii) is based on what she calls two seemingly contradictory principles that she and Mutini (1975:9-10) found operating in rural Tlaxcala. These principles are (a') that no one is expected to refuse to enter into a compadrazgo relationship, even though there are socially acceptable ways of excusing oneself; and (b') that nonetheless, it is always known ahead of time, that is, the requestor would only ask people he knows beforehand will not turn down the offer. As different to the Tlaxcalan case, compadrazgo/padrinazgo is " a n o f f e r y o u 'c a n' r e f u s e " both in Batey and in the rest of the country. In other words, people resort to the devices prescribed by the rules of etiquette to relief themselves from such responsibilities. These excuses range from pleading to already have previous commitments made to a network of ritual kinsmen that is becoming unmanageable, to being busy on the day the ceremony is scheduled. Therefore, although an individual's control of who is going to ask him/her to form a ritual kin union is limited to an extent, he/she can control how many and with whom bonds are finally established.

Let us at last consider the asymmetrical issue of inter-ethnic compadrazgo and look into Forbes' suggestions one step further.

(C) The inherent asymmetrical implications of compadrazgo become more conspicuous when it involves actors coming from dissimilar ethnic groups (though still from the same social class). It was already established that race/ethnic-background is an important criterion in Batey as well as in the larger Dominican society (Castillo 1971, 1974). It was also noted that there are a considerable number of inter-ethnic compadrazgos in Batey; but the overwhelming majority of these links were initiated by the members of the ethnic

group held in an inferior status, i.e., Haitian residents. When a non-Dominican invites a Dominican to become involved in a spiritual relationship, he is actually requesting a double favor: He is asking the Dominican (a) to accept all the responsibilities involved in such events; and (b) to give him (the non-Dominican) a certain status of social equality. Yet, the greatest satisfaction a non-Dominican may receive is being asked by a Dominican to become a co-godparent. And, as an additional answer to Forbes' first two propositions (cited in B, above), I dare suggest that in either case the Dominican is more in control of the situation than the other party. That is, what matters is not necessarily in these cases who is the requestor and the one-being-requested, but the relative position of the actors before the consumation of the compadrazgo. Let us also keep in view that the Dominican party may always opt to decline the offer if he considers it too burdensome (as if the relationship to be established were of a descending-vertical character). Therefore, Forbes' (1971) propositions (i,ii) that the requestor always retains control and that conversely the one being requested cannot be in control of the situation is not necessarily universal. I shall now turn to the remaining related issues raised by Forbes' suggestions regarding the choice of compadres vis-à-vis economic maximization.

3. The Limits of Maximization

In her still unpublished, excellent study, Forbes (1972) rehearses a combined substantivist-formalist interpretation of compadrazgo choice-making in Tlaxcala. We have now passed to a different realm

within socio-cultural anthropology, that of economic-anthropology, and to its most critical (internal) debate between the substantivist and the formalist positions. Due to obvious limitations of space (and focus), I cannot afford to elaborate at this point on the differences separating the two points of view; besides, better-qualified authors have analyzed them thoroughly (vid. Dalton 1972; Cook 1973; et al.).[33] In the next paragraphs, the discussion will be directed to a succint application of Forbes' suggested eclectic strategy, transplanted to Batey's setting. In integrating both theoretical approaches, one must consider both: (A) the "purely economic" aspects--such as the expected flow of material goods exchange involved in any compadrazgo relationship, which is seen as a levelling mechanism from the substantivist corner; (B) as well as the choice of ascending compadrazgo ties--considered as the maximization of economic-goods from the formalist viewpoint. It is contended, in agreement with Forbes, that the utilization of one approach to the exclusion of the other leads to inconclusive and misleading results.

It has already been established that compadrazgo is essentially horizontal in Batey by Mintz-and-Wolf's (1950) yardstick (i.e., within the same socio-economic class), and that this is so due to the inherent characteristics of Caribbean plantation rural workers' sub-culture, that is, they are class isolates (Mintz [various]). Although the plantation where Batey is located has been administered in an impersonal manner for some fifty years (since the North American administration [see note 14]), Bateyanos do interact with the managerial staff on a daily basis. The management, let me add parenthetically, is overwhelmingly of Spanish-Dominican heritage (as opposed to Haitian or Black West Indian heritage), though this group is numerically followed

in importance by the non-Latin West Indians (i.e., "cocolos"). Many of the supervisors live in communities not far from Batey. Yet, few managers are ever asked to enter into compadrazgo relationships by Bateyanos since they are perceived as belonging to an upper class. The local sub-culture frowns upon such attempts at crossing class lines in an ascending direction. One must never appear to be interesado --a term implying having selfish, economic ulterior motives. In other words, in spite of the persistent poverty, pure economic maximization in compadrazgo choice-making is unacceptable. The bond is considered much too sacred to be desecrated by such hidden agendas; therein the resulting horizontality exhibited by Batey's model of co-godparenthood.

If the parents of a child ask a manager to baptize their child --even within the context of the same ethnic identity--the requestors must weigh against their desire for economic maximization, the socio-cultural sanctions that would ensue precribed by local norms. To put it another way the couple has to decide if the "price" to be paid (i.e., gossip, social disapproval, etc.) is worth the "investment" of asking a non-equal. Other related factors to be considered in reaching a final decision include the risks involved, e.g., what if the manager does not live up to the expectations of the relationship--at least from the requestor's point of view (vid. the VandenBerghe's [1963] suggestions--discussed previously--regarding non-reciprocity, asymmetry, values differentials, etc.); what if he is transferred (as it often occurs) to another location. The ideology calls for an often face-to-face social intercourse and Bateyanos are convinced that when compadres are far apart the ritual bond is lost.

(a) Allow me to clarify that my statements are not to be interpreted as implying that Bateyanos do not deviate from the established

horizontal preference cultural standards. On the contrary; they quite often do deviate; but not before calculating the pro's and con's of the culturally provided options of which they are aware.

(b) A conclusion that now does become conspicuous thanks to an integration of the substantive and formal approaches is that compadrazgo does operate as an equalizing mechanism. It is obvious that the institution serves as a brake--at least for most Bateyanos--in the attempts at moving upward by means of establishing ritual kin ties. Therefore, in the long run, my investigation confirms Mintz's (1956: 390-391) proposition--mentioned earlier (in I,ii-iii)--to the effect that compadrazgo may operate as a brake on the socio-economic mobility of participating individuals in a homogeneous society, but not necessarily in the social-control-on-migration way envisioned by Mintz.

(c) In addition, we may now cope with the Mintz and Wolf's (1950) corollary (cited above, 1,a,i) to their hypothesis concerning the horizontality of compadrazgo in homogeneous situations. According to this corollary, the function of the resulting horizontality is to augment class solidarity and to broaden the interstice with other classes. It is evident, via the substantivist/formalist integrated analysis, that the proposition applies to the situation in Batey. After considering all his options, the father of an unbaptized child will conclude to intensify his ties with a friend of the same class category.[34]

(d) Still another consideration is due. It has been explained that rather than extending their ties ascending vertically, and possibly maximizing the number of "significant others" by selecting more socially distant people, Dominican Bateyanos would most likely opt to intensify

intra-class, equal age group, same ethnic identity ties. Non-Dominican Bateyanos, however, seek same-class, but different ethnic group friends as co-godparents. This does not mean that non-Dominicans do not establish intra-ethnic ties; they do. But they are aware that it is to their benefit to maximize their choice across ethnic lines, and the "sub-sub-culture" of non-Dominican Bateyanos does not frown upon such attempts, but rather encourages them. Much of the preceding discussion leads one to conclude that the VandenBerghe's (1966,1240) additional hypothesis that intensification is preferred by those in positions relatively secure and independent also applies.

(e) It is in these contexts that a combination of both economic-anthropological approaches, the substantivist and the formalist, makes possible a meaningful understanding of compadrazgo choice-making. The dialectic dynamics of "economic rational maximization" seen from these perspectives becomes relative and cannot be intelligle in vacuo.

We have so far seen several examples of the different manifestations of compadrazgo (and the same manifestations — from different vantage points), of its choice-making options, and their consequential, discernible utilitarian missions. They have been presented both etnhographically and cross-culturally, while probing into some of the well-known assumptions, propositions and approaches, and experimenting with interrelated hypothetical formulations. The final section will present some additional suggestions.

V. TOWARDS AN ETHNOLOGY OF COMPADRAZGO

In the concluding section I first defend the position that compadrazgo constitutes a socio-cultural system, and then pose some problems for future research.

1. The Systemic-Mechanical Aspects of Compadrazgo

Nutini (1975; 1977),[35] more than anyone else has stressed that compadrazgo operates in a systematic manner in any society, rather than in a haphazardly put-together series of dyadic (or triadic) relationships as some authors erroneously seem to assume (e.g., Dávila 1971; Foster [various]; Gudeman 1972; Reyes 1958; Rubel 1955; Weitlaner 1945). In effect, compadrazgo may best be studied by analyzing its "structural forms", which are composed of separate but integrated "mechanical aspects" (Coy 1974; Ingham 1970; Lévi-Strauss 1949; Nutini [various]; Thompson 1971). I have attempted to integrate in this study an application of my own interpretation of such strategy. For example, I have tried to demonstrate that each of the "component parts" of compadrazgo choice-making options operate in Batey in a socio-homeostatic functional manner, one part supplementing the other, creating in the balance a system-like whole.

From another plane, the way I see it is that the people of Batey are thoughroughly acquainted with each "component part" of the institution, know how to handle each of the instrumental and institutionalized aspects of the system--such as the selection of participating actors--and behave in this context in a rather uniformly fashion. That is, each Bateyano carries in his mind a personally interpreted version of the locally shared system--just as he does for his native language. It was seen (esp. in IV,3), though, that

full compliance to the cultural-ideological model in terms of obligations, reciprocity, and the frequency, intensity, and quality of interactions may be related to factors that are exogenous to the institution itself, but not necessarily to the system as a whole. For example, the activation of rights and duties may ultimately depend on the specific wishes and goals of the individuals participating in the relationship at a particular time. Reference was also made to the contrasts found between the ideal and the real behavior in Batey (e.g., custody of an orphan godchild), and to the frequent cases of deviations from the cultural norms. Much of the discussion presented above to this effect may be encapsulated in the proposition that deviations from the compadrazgo model constructed are ultimately limited, and are explainable in terms of socio-economic-cultural factors.

2. Concluding Remarks

It has been argued that compadrazgo can serve contradictory rôles in society; it may function as an integrative mechanism and at the same time it may operate as a disruptive force. Foster (1969) has proposed that compadrazgo may be viewed as a positive substitute for a strong kinship system, since it assumes many of the traditional functions of kinship groupings. As so many other authors, Foster is treating compadrazgo as a fictive or pseudokinship phenomenon. Social scientists have long admitted that the distinction between real kinship (i.e., consanguineal or affinal, according to society's custom) and pseudo-kinship (fictive, artificial) is not always easily defined. Notwithstanding, Pitt-Rivers (1968) has correctly proposed to distinguish ritual kinship from other "non-real" kinship. As he

notes, there is no fiction in the strict sense of the term in ritual kinship, of which compadrazgo is the best known form. Bateyanos are aware, for example, that co-godparents and godchildren are neither consanguineally nor affinally related; their ties are considered of a spiritual nature--but in some cases carry more force than the other two forms of kinship. Furthermore, spiritual relatives are included in Bateyanos' personal kindreds. The Dominican kindred in general, let me add, presents itself as an amorphous, unlimited all-purpose, ego-centered grouping (Moreno and Alum 1976:102), and I suspect this also applies to the other Latin Caribbean societies (Cuba, Puerto Rico, etc.) as well.

The question of the inclusion of spiritual affines in the operation of the kindred needs to be explored in depth and cross-culturally. Everybody everywhere knows how to draw distinctions between those who are to be considered kinsmen and those who are not, as well as those to whom incest prohibition applies. Endogamous compadrazgos, such as that of Spain (Pitt-Rivers 1958) do not seem to fall into the systemic schema of compadrazgo alluded to previously. However, it is precisely when ritual-kin compadrazgo choice is extended beyond natural/affinal kinsmen where the institution commences to operate as a system. The striking attribute of exogamous compadrazgo is that it is "kinship by choice" (Abrams 1976:192)--and few authors make this point that clear. As one informant put it: "relatives you can't choose; you are stuck with them [by virtue of birth]; but compadres and friends, you are free to choose..."

A close look at compadrazgo thus reveals a host of thought-provoking issues. There is an urgent need for new studies comparing compadrazgo to other forms of "real" and fictive kinship, as well as

to the other reported cases of ritual kinship in particular (e.g., Chock 1974; Eisendstadt 1956; Erasmus 1950; Filipović 1961; Freed 1963; Hammel 1968; Paul 1942; Pitt-Rivers 1968; inter alia)--both in the Old World and in the Americas.[36]

In fact, in our own Caribbean area we need to increase our knowledge of the extent and functions of ritual kinship beyond the early reports of the Herskovits' (1947:119) for Trinidad, R. Smith (1956:132, 134) for Guyana, and Taylor (1951:92) for Black Caribs in Belize, among others. It is argued that a large number of comparative-field studies of compadrazgo will provide a fuller type characterization necessary for any nascent science such as anthropology.[37]

Previous students have plausibly demonstrated the importance of kinship studies to an understanding of social structure and to the process of modernization in contemporary societies (Carlos 1968; Kottak 1967; Strickon 1962). From this stand, the study of compadrazgo provides a unique opportunity to check different aspects of socio-cultural change in a number of similar and dissimilar cases.[38] In sum, the study of compadrazgo, such as the one presented, is of the genre most needed in the social sciences, for the refinement of socio-cultural theories, and more importantly, the subsequent application of those ideas toward the solution of human problems.

VI. APPENDIXES

A P P E N D I X . I

The Literature on Compadrazgo

In 1972, this student was involved in a colaborative research regarding compadrazgo in Latin America (vid. Alum 1977). Of some fifty ethnographic publications analyzed, only five were found to be truly revealing about the institution (we need not list them all here; e.g., Gillin 1945, 1951; Tylor 1861; inter alia). In fact, Nutini, et al.'s (1977) forthcoming volumes on compadrazgo in Tlaxcala and its ideological implications for the rest of the continent is the first extensive, detailed study of the system. There are at least three unpublished theses--of different levels (Castillo 1971; Paul 1942; Vincent 1966)--and several comparative studies (e.g., Dávila 1971; Eisendstadt 1956; Foster 1953; Mintz & Wolf 1950; Pitt-Rivers 1968; Ravicz 1967). The bulk of compadrazgo studies, nonetheless, has been carried out in Meso-America, particularly in México, as it may be gathered from the following list. I have arranged the citations in chornological order; this way, the growth in compadrazgo interest may be better assessed. (The aforementioned references are excluded):

Rojas-González 1943
Weitlaner 1945

Erasmus 1950
Rubel 1955
Anderson 1956*
_____ 1957
Reyes-González 1958**
Stavenghagen 1959

Foster 1961
Deshon 1963
Martínez 1963
VanDenBerghe's 1966
Osborn 1968
Foster 1969

Ingham 1970
Thompson 1971
Forbes 1971
_____ 1972
--Gudeman 1972
Middleton 1975 ---Castillo 1974
Nutini 1975***

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*The Italian compadrazgo may be appreciated in Puzo's (1969) novel.

**Vid. Pitt-Rivers' (1958) report for compadrazgo/padrinazgo in Spain

***Vid. also Chock 1974; Filipović 1961; Freed 1963; Hammel 1968; et al. for (other) European accounts of ritual/spiritual kinship.

APPENDIX II

RESUMEN

El estudio presenta (A) una descripción socio-antropológica del compadrazgo, considerándolo como una institutción socio-cultural, discernible en una comunidad típica de trabajadores rurales, perteneciente a una plantación de caña de azúcar localizada en el sureste de la República Dominicana, y operada por el estado. (B) El escrito también traza la etno-historia del complejo cultural del compadrazgo desde la Europa antigua a la América Latina contemporánea, (C) esboza la bibliografía teórica y etnográfica relevante, y (D) formula nuevas interrogantes para investigaciones futuras, subrayando la importancia del parentesco ritual y la necesidad de más y mejores estudios al respecto. (E) Finalmente, se ensayan algunas comparaciones intra e inter-culturales, y (F) se someten a prueba una serie de hipótesis concernientes al tipo de parentesco formado en el compadrazgo. Entre otras cosas, se concluye:

(a) que el modelo construído correspondiente a la comunidad estudiada no coincide en su totalidad con el modelo reportado correspondiente a la macro-sociedad Dominicana, debido a peculiaridades intrínsicas en la subcultura de obreros rurales.

(b) que la horizontalidad dentro de una misma clase social en la selección de compadres no implica una coincidencia con una simetría recíproca en el intercambio social implícito en las relaciones interpersonales establecidas en el compadrazgo, ya que siempre hay diferencias en las expectaciones de los diferentes actores envueltos.

(c) que el supuesto propósito de llevar a un máximo racional y lógico-económico la conducta de la selección de compadres es en un final relativo.

(d) que el compadrazgo provee inequívocos mecanismos funcionales para el control social, aunque su función específica con respecto a la integración de grupos étnicos disímiles es sólo limitada, dado a una concatenación de circumstancias exógenas.

(e) y que, aunque la institución funciona indudablemente de una manera sistemática y normativa, las desviaciones de sus patrones pueden ser predecibles de acuerdo a una serie de opciones reducibles a un número limitado, y que son explicables en términos de factores socio-económico-culturales.

En vista de la escasez de investigaciones similares, se pretende que el presente reporte constituya una contribución singular.

Rolando A. Alum

N O T E S

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1
Literally, co-parenthood (i.e., co-godparenthood, from god-sib in Old English); compater in Latin, compari in Italian, Gevatter in German, kum in Serbian and Russian, compare in French, koumbari in Greek, and so on (Mintz & Wolf 1950; Pitt-Rivers 1968).

2
By culture complex--of which compadrazgo is only an example--it is meant an interrelated group of culture trait aggregates.

3
Edward B. Tylor, the pioneering British (cultural) anthropologist, was already reporting it in his 1861 classic, Anahuac.

4
See the Appendix section for a consideration of the body of literature on ritual kinship (vid. Nutini et al., 1977; Alum 1977).

5
Even though two exceptional Caribbean community studies, Wolf's (1951) and Mintz's (1951) doctoral dissertations--both later incorporated in Steward, et al.'s (1956), The People of Puerto Rico--served as paradigms in the formulation of compadrazgo models in a seminal article previously authored by both, Mintz-&-Wolf (1950). The said article, as will be seen below, has served as the departing point for most compadrazgo studies ever since. Mintz's (1956:386-91) and Padilla's (1956:294-95) chapters in Steward's (op. cit.) volume, in fact, are the only instances where compadrazgo is reported to some extent in sugar producing communities --but none of these two writings concentrate specifically on the institution. On the other hand, the dearth of anthropological reports on the Dominican Republic is appaling (vid. Castillo 1971; González 1974 & various; Hendricks 1974; Moreno & Alum 1976; Walker 1974; & passim).

6
Vid. Mintz and Wolf's (orig. 1950, 1974:21) complaint about the total absence of compadrazgo studies in plantations and the need for their production.

7
(See previous note). In fact, the social organization of Caribbean plantation sub-cultures remains largelly unstudied (Horowitz 1971; Jayawardena 1963; P.A.U. 1959; Rubin 1960; inter alia).

8 These differences include, though not exclusively that, while haciendas are operated by a dominant land-owner and supplies a small-scale market, plantations are operated by a corporate owner and supplies a large-scale market (Wolf & Mintz 1957).

9
It is contended that these hypotheses summarize the basic propositions of compadrazgo studies known to date.

10
Interestingly enough, Beals (1946:102-04) reports that the Tarascan Cherán of México who practice child circumcision, adopt sponsoring godparents for the occasion.

11
There is ethno-historical evidence of pre-hispanic compadrazgo-like institutions in Meso-America which syncretized with the Hispanic form (Paul 1942; Rojas-González 1943).

12
The concept of the kindred vis-à-vis compadrazgo will be considered in the concluding section. (Vid Erasmus, 1950--on incest prohibition).

13
A gloss of indigenous Arawak-Taíno origins, batey refers to a hamlet in contemporary sugar-cane plantations in Hispanic Greater Antilles (Moya-Pons 1973).

14
The plantation was apparently organized around the late 1910's by a Spaniard who had migrated from Cuba, according to informants' oral history. It was later sold to a U.S. enterprise and around the 1950's was acquired by the Trujillo family. Since the downfall of the Trujillo dictatorship (see next note), all of his twelve sugar enterprises are administered by the C.E.A., Consejo Estatal del Azúcar (State Sugar Council). This particular plantation is constituted by some ten colonias or fincas (farms), each one of which has at least one hamlet such as Batey.

15
The Dominican Republic occupies roughly 2/3 of the island of Hispaniola--one of the Greater Antilles--shared with the Republic of Haiti to the east. Dominicana, as is often referred, has suffered foreign

invasions by, and/or economic dependency from Spain, England, the Netherlands, France, Germany, the U.S., and neighboring Haiti; as well as several dictatorships since its (first) independence from Spain in 1821--such as Trujillo's, from 1930 to 1961. Sugar is the country's main production and export, and the U.S. its main buyer (Cf. González 1973-b; Moreno 1975).

16

Except for the first timer Haitian--known as "congoses"--most other non-Dominicans are able to communicate in Spanish, aside from their respective native tongues (e.g., English, Patois, Papiamento, and so on).

17

The question of Haitian migrant workers in the D.R. is extremely complex, exhibiting innumerable historical, political, social, and economic dimensions. For one thing, more often than not, Haitians are brought illegally--as far as the Dominican formal system is concerned--in many instances in armed forces' trucks, by shameful agreements with Haitian border officials (Corten, et al. 1972; Hernández 1973; Réynoso 1974). From time to time, the Dominican and also the Haitian press print scandalous reports about Haitian migrants (e.g., El Nacional, Aug. 22, 1976:7; Ultima Hora, Aug. 10, 1976:9 /see note 21, below/).

18

Among Haitian extraction couples, this pattern has a tradition at home, known as the institution of the placé, which sometimes has temporaneity (and)/or polygamous connotations (Bastien 1961; Comhaire-Sylvain 1958; Herskovits 1937).

19

This is not surprising, for Mintz (1960; various) found a similar phenomenon among Puerto Rican cane workers. Furthermore, protestantism has a long tradition among immigrants in the D.R. (Lockward 1976).

20

Mintz (1951, 1956, 1960, 1974) adds that the only possible alternative to rural workers is migration to the U.S., at least in the case of the Puertorrican cane workers he studied in the late 1940's. In the case of the Dominican workers, however, their condition is so precarious that they can not afford even this alternative, though they often migrate from plantation to plantation in search of better conditions. The bulk of Dominican migrants to the U.S.--especially to the New York City area--are peasants from the north-central Cibao region (González 1970, 1973-a, 1976; Hendricks 1974; Moreno & Alum 1976).

21

This is portrayed in the literary tradition to some extent by Marrero-Aristy (1953) for Dominicana, Laguerre (1935) for Puerto Rico, and Loveira (1922) for Cuba, among others, in their respective narrative novels on plantation life.

22

Phenotypically, Dominicans range from Negroid to Caucasoid, with every likely intermixture--including Asiatic and possibly remants of

aboriginal populations--though negritude is culturally identified primarily with Haitians (González 1973-a). During the Trujillo tyranny, Hatianophobia became institutionalized and still today the press often carries complaints of the "now peaceful Haitian invasion" (e.g., see note 17, above).

23

Althogh Nutini (1975:6-7) complains of this almost à priori assumption by other authors, when it comes to describe examples of the compadrazgo network, he himself offers baptism compadrazgo as the paradigm.

24

From the emic viewpoint, the rôle of the godfather at baptism is to "extract 'evil thoughts' (malas ideas) from the neophyte's head", converting them worthy of a'saint' (santo), and to further provide protection against the "evil-eye". Bateyanos are not far in this belief from the purpose of baptism in its pristine stages in Europe, where it began as a form of "exorcising" the child of the "stigma of the original sin"--facilitating his going to heaven after death; otherwise, in case of an unbaptized child, he/she would go to a state of "limbo", according to the belief (Corblet 1882; Kearney 1925; Mintz & Wolf 1950).

25

In contrast to the rural Haitian scale of values (Bastien 1961:491), the mother and the baptism godmother do not stand on an equal footing as objects of abuse in the D.R. The grossest insults are never directed to the opponent's godmother, but solely to the mother.

26

There is an additional kind of ritual kinship found in Batey but which I am not yet prepared to adequately discuss, i.e., the vodum rites godparents/co-godparents. Versions of Haitian vodum are widely practiced in the D.R. not only among Haitian residents, but even among Dominicans (Lizardo 1975; Deive 1975), though this practice is not easily detected since it is frowned (and sometimes punished) upon by the enveloping Dominican society. There is a variety of vodum compadrazgos, such as that established over the baptism of vodum drums, the vodum co-godparents of twins (twins are highly revered), etc. (Bastien 1961:491; Herskovits 1937: 97-99, 145, 275).

27

Two other hypotheses propose that (b) where the community is socially heterogeneous (e.g., Wolf 1951, 1956) compadrazgo is bound to be vertical --where Foster (1953) proposes that compadrazgo has replaced the cofradías and gremios institutions of Spain; and (c) that where the situation is of rapid social change (Gillin 1945), co-godparenthood mechanisms multiply. Let me repeat that Batey fits more into the first category than the second one. As to the third, although the country itself is experiencing accelerating socio-cultural change, the sub-culture of Batey itself is not moving at the same rate.

28

Deshon (1963), however, found that her study in a Yucatán hacienda disconfirmed Mintz and Wolf's (1950) proposition for homogeneous societies. I cannot afford to elaborate on her conclusions now, save that one way to look at it is that compadrazgo is simply not one of the main mechanisms for the intensification and extension of interpersonal relationships in that particular community (Nutini n.d.).

29

Interestingly enough, in almost one year I have occasioned to notice at least two instances in which the current Dominican President has become a baptism godfather. The first such instance is the case of a set of quadruple girls whom were baptized at the National Palace. The father of the neophytes, a worker in a private sugar enterprise, was later guaranteed a $100/monthly government assistance (Listín Diario, July 26, 1976:1,16; Sept. 16, 1976:7-A). In the second instance, the President became godfather to the daughter of a government official (Listín Diario, Nov. 19, 1976:9-A). In a still more recent occasion, the President stood as "godfather" to the civil marriage of a high official of one of the state-owned sugar enterprises. The ceremony was held at the National Palace, officiated by a judge whom, incidentally, is a brother of the chief of police (Listín Diario, Nov. 30, 1976:4-A).

30

For it would be an "injustice, a sin...for them to fight...", informants reported. Strangely enough, in her otherwise excellent study on conflict resolution in Zinacantán--a municipio in México which is, incidentally, near San Cristóbal--the town studied by the VandenBerghe's (1966)--Collier (1973) does not refer to the possible rôle of compadrazgo in the avoidance (and/or in the resolution) of inter-personal disputes, save for a brief reference that the town elders have usually many compadres and therefore, their rôle as mediators is facilitated since they are respected highly (Collier 1973:126,183; cf. Alum & Miller 1975).

31

Sayres (1956) considers compadrazgo an institution exhibiting dialectical positive and negative cathexis (cf. the VandenBerghe's 1966). Based on field studies in Colombia, Sayres concludes that the suppresion of animosity against ritual kinsmen concomitant in the relationship creates "negative affect", that is, the production of conscious resentment and antagonism. One cannot completely dismiss this proposition as operating at the individual-psychological level. But it is my impression from my experience in Batey that at the societal level "negative affect" is insignificant (cf. Nutini n.d.).

32

Dominicans refer to an unbaptized child as being "muro", probably meaning "moro", i.e.,"moor", non-Christian (heathen)--a concept of Iberian heritage.

33

In brief, (a) the formal approach tends to follow conventional neo-classical economics, is ahistorical (synchronic), analytic, and assumes that "economizing" (i.e., resource utilization) is everywhere in society. (b) The substantivist approach favors comparative political economy (i.e., Marxian economics--though not necessarily Marxist), is diachronic (historical), and assumes that the economy is a boundless field of economizing (i.e., "rational" decision-making). As Cook (1973:808) puts it, neither provides a delineation of the economic sphere. Nonetheless, anthropologists (passim) often interpret the first one as being culturally-bound, concerned more with an ideological epistemology; and the second one as being more relativist,

concerned with material epistemology. The polarization thus has an epistemological genesis not only insofar the bifurcation of the scientific subject-object, but also on the epistemologies of the leaders of each camp. Cook thus rightly implies that the causes for the failures of a rapprochement between both strategies partially falls as well in the realm of the sociology of knowledge, as is the case with so many other "school debates" (cf. Dalton 1971).

[34]One quibble I have with the corollary to Mintz's hypothesis though is that it implies that the function of horizontal compadrazgo in regards to class solidarity only applies to a homogeneous social class over which there are relative upper classes (cf. Middleton 1975). It seems to me that a more generalizing proposition would eliminate the implication to the additional functional widening of gaps with the"upper classes", and would simply refer to the "other classes"--regardless of the relative position.

[35]Vid. Alum & Pye (1976) for an assessment of Nutini's theoretical position in anthropology.

[36]For example, there are no studies of compadrazgo in the Philippines, where the Spanish culture left its imprint (Rawson n.d.).

[37]Vid. Alum (1975) regarding generalizations in the socio-behavioral sciences.

[38]This student is aware that some questions remain unanswered, partially due to the limitations of scope and space. As far as the contrast between Batey's sub-cultural model and the cases reported for other societies (especially the national Dominican model [Castillo 1971, 1974]), this researcher views the plantation community as a small semi-autonomous social field, surrounded by the larger national society, which in turn supplies the plantation with norms that are plastic, subject to local adaptability (Barth; Moore 1973) to the sub-culture of what Mintz (various) has called "rural proletarians"--since they are "neither peasants, nor proletarians". It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to future model constructions for other plantations in the D.R. and elsewhere, as well as for the country at large (Castillo op. cit.)--for sub-cultural variations must be taken into consideration as well (Steward 1956).

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